Exemplars of Reading Text Complexity, Quality, and Range & Sample Performance Tasks Related to Core Standards

Selecting Text Exemplars

The following text samples primarily serve to exemplify the level of complexity and quality that the Standards require all students in a given grade band to engage with. Additionally, they are suggestive of the breadth of texts that students should encounter in the text types required by the Standards. The choices should serve as useful guideposts in helping educators select texts of similar complexity, quality, and range for their own classrooms. They expressly do not represent a partial or complete reading list.

The process of text selection was guided by the following criteria:

- Complexity. Appendix A describes in detail a three-part model of measuring text complexity based on qualitative and quantitative indices of inherent text difficulty balanced with educators' professional judgment in matching readers and texts in light of particular tasks. In selecting texts to serve as exemplars, the work group began by soliciting contributions from teachers, educational leaders, and researchers who have experience working with students in the grades for which the texts have been selected. These contributors were asked to recommend texts that they or their colleagues have used successfully with students in a given grade band. The work group made final selections based in part on whether qualitative and quantitative measures indicated that the recommended texts were of sufficient complexity for the grade band. For those types of texts—particularly poetry and multimedia sources—for which these measures are not as well suited, professional judgment necessarily played a greater role in selection.

- Quality. While it is possible to have high-complexity texts of low inherent quality, the work group solicited only texts of recognized value. From the pool of submissions gathered from outside contributors, the work group selected classic or historically significant texts as well as contemporary works of comparable literary merit, cultural significance, and rich content.

- Range. After identifying texts of appropriate complexity and quality, the work group applied other criteria to ensure that the samples presented in each band represented as broad a range of sufficiently complex, high-quality texts as possible. Among the factors considered were initial publication date, authorship, and subject matter.

Copyright and Permissions

For those exemplar texts not in the public domain, we secured permissions and in some cases employed a conservative interpretation of Fair Use, which allows limited, partial use of copyrighted text for a nonprofit educational purpose as long as that purpose does not impair the rights holder's ability to seek a fair return for his or her work. In instances where we could not employ Fair Use and have been unable to secure permission, we have listed a title without providing an excerpt. Thus, some short texts are not excerpted here, as even short passages from them would constitute a substantial portion of the entire work. In addition, illustrations and other graphics in texts are generally not reproduced here. Such visual elements are particularly important in texts for the youngest students and in many informational texts for readers of all ages. (Using the qualitative criteria outlined in Appendix A, the work group considered the importance and complexity of graphical elements when placing texts in bands.)

When excerpts appear, they serve only as stand-ins for the full text. The Standards require that students engage with appropriately complex literary and informational works; such complexity is best found in whole texts rather than passages from such texts.

Please note that these texts are included solely as exemplars in support of the Standards. Any additional use of those texts that are not in the public domain, such as for classroom use or curriculum development, requires independent permission from the rights holders. The texts may not be copied or distributed in any way other than as part of the overall Common Core State Standards Initiative documents.

Sample Performance Tasks

The text exemplars are supplemented by brief performance tasks that further clarify the meaning of the Standards. These sample tasks illustrate specifically the application of the Standards to texts of sufficient complexity, quality, and range. Relevant Reading standards are noted in brackets following each task, and the words in italics in the task reflect the wording of the Reading standard itself. (Individual grade-specific Reading standards are identified by their strand, grade, and number, so that RI.4.3, for example, stands for Reading, Informational Text, grade 4, standard 3.)

How to Read This Document

The materials that follow are divided into text complexity grade bands as defined by the Standards: K–1, 2–3, 4–5, 6–8, 9–10, and 11–CCR. Each band's exemplars are divided into text types matching those required in the Standards for a given grade. K–5 exemplars are separated into stories, poetry, and informational texts (as well as read-aloud texts in kindergarten through grade 3). The 6–CCR exemplars are divided into English language arts (ELA), history/social studies, and science, mathematics, and technical subjects, with the ELA texts further subdivided into stories, drama, poetry, and informational texts. (The history/social studies texts also include some arts-related texts.) Citations introduce each excerpt, and additional citations are included for texts not excerpted in the appendix. Within each grade band and after each text type, sample performance tasks are included for select texts.

Media Texts

Selected excerpts are accompanied by annotated links to related media texts freely available online at the time of the publication of this document.

created, and to facilitate interaction between more than one performer. Musical notation, like language, has ancient origins, dating back to the Middle East in the third millennium BC. The ancient Greeks appear to have been the first to try to represent variations of musical pitch through the medium of the alphabet, and successive civilizations all over the world attempted to formulate similar systems of recognizable musical notation.

Neumatic notation The earliest surviving Western European notational system was called "neumatic notation"—a system of symbols which attempted to portray the rise and fall of a melodic line. These date back to the 9th century AD, and were associated with the performance of sacred music particularly plainsong—in monastic institutions. Several early manuscript sources contain sacred texts with accompanying notation, although there was no standard system. The first appearance of staff notation, in which pitch was indicated by noteheads on or between lines with a symbol called a clef at the beginning to fix the pitch of one note, was in the 9th century French treatise Musica enchiriadis. At the same time music for instruments (particularly organ and lute) was beginning to be written down in diagrammatic form known as tablature, which indicated the positions of the player's fingers.

Mann, Charles C. *Before Columbus: The Americas of 1491.* New York: Atheneum, 2009. (2009)
From Chapter 2

If you asked modern scientists to name the world's greatest achievements in genetic engineering, you might be surprised by one of their low-tech answers: maize.

Scientists know that maize, called "corn" in the United States, was created more than 6,000 years ago. Although exactly how this well-know plant was invented is still a mystery, they do know where it was invented—in the narrow "waist" of southern Mexico. This jumble of mountains, beaches, wet tropical forests, and dry plains is the most ecologically diverse part of Mesoamerica. Today it is the home of more than a dozen different Indian groups, but the human history of these hills and valleys stretches far into the past.

From Hunting to Gathering to Farming

About 11,500 years ago a group of Paleoindians was living in caves in what is now the Mexican state of Puebla. These people were hunters, but they did not bring down mastodons and mammoths. Those huge species were already extinct. Now and then they even feasted on giant turtles (which were probably a lot easier to catch than the fast-moving deer and rabbits.)

Over the next 2,000 years, though, game animals grew scarce. Maybe the people of the area had been too successful at hunting. Maybe, as the climate grew slowly hotter and drier, the grasslands where the animals lived shrank, and so the animal populations shrank, as well. Perhaps the situation was a combination of these two reasons. Whatever the explanation, hunters of Puebla and the neighboring state of Oaxaca turned to plants for more of their food.

Informational Texts: Science, Mathematics, and Technical Subjects

Euclid. *Elements*. Translated by Richard Fitzpatrick. Austin: Richard Fitzpatrick, 2005. (300 BCE)
From *Elements*, Book 1

Definitions

1. A point is that of which there is no part.
2. And a line is a length without breadth.
3. And the extremities of a line are points.
4. A straight-line is whatever lies evenly with points upon itself.
5. And a surface is that which has length and breadth alone.
6. And the extremities of a surface are lines.
7. A plane surface is whatever lies evenly with straight-lines upon itself.

8. And a plane angle is the inclination of the lines, when two lines in a plane meet one another, and are not laid down straight-on with respect to one another.

9. And when the lines containing the angle are straight then the angle is called rectilinear.

10. And when a straight-line stood upon (another) straight-line makes adjacent angles (which are) equal to one another, each of the equal angles is a right-angle, and the former straight-line is called perpendicular to that upon which it stands.

11. An obtuse angle is greater than a right-angle.

12. And an acute angle is less than a right-angle.

13. A boundary is that which is the extremity of something.

14. A figure is that which is contained by some boundary or boundaries.

15. A circle is a plane figure contained by a single line [which is called a circumference], (such that) all of the straight-lines radiating towards [the circumference] from a single point lying inside the figure are equal to one another.

16. And the point is called the center of the circle.

17. And a diameter of the circle is any straight-line, being drawn through the center, which is brought to an end in each direction by the circumference of the circle. And any such (straight-line) cuts the circle in half.

18. And a semi-circle is the figure contained by the diameter and the circumference it cuts off. And the center of the semi-circle is the same (point) as the (center of) the circle.

19. Rectilinear figures are those figures contained by straight-lines: trilateral figures being contained by three straight-lines, quadrilateral by four, and multilateral by more than four.

20. And of the trilateral figures: an equilateral triangle is that having three equal sides, an isosceles (triangle) that having only two equal sides, and a scalene (triangle) that having three unequal sides.

21. And further of the trilateral figures: a right-angled triangle is that having a right-angle, an obtuse-angled (triangle) that having an obtuse angle, and an acute-angled (triangle) that having three acute angles.

22. And of the quadrilateral figures: a square is that which is right-angled and equilateral, a rectangle that which is right-angled but not equilateral, a rhombus that which is equilateral but not right-angled, and a rhomboid that having opposite sides and angles equal to one another which is neither right-angled nor equilateral. And let quadrilateral figures besides these be called trapezia.

23. Parallel lines are straight-lines which, being in the same plane, and being produced to infinity in each direction, meet with one another in neither (of these directions).

Postulates

1. Let it have been postulated to draw a straight-line from any point to any point.

2. And to produce a finite straight-line continuously in a straight-line.

3. And to draw a circle with any center and radius.

4. And that all right-angles are equal to one another.

5. And that if a straight-line falling across two (other) straight-lines makes internal angles on the same side (of itself) less than two right-angles, being produced to infinity, the two (other) straight-lines meet on that side (of the original straight-line) that the (internal angles) are less than two right-angles (and do not meet on the other side).

Common Notions

1. Things equal to the same thing are also equal to one another.

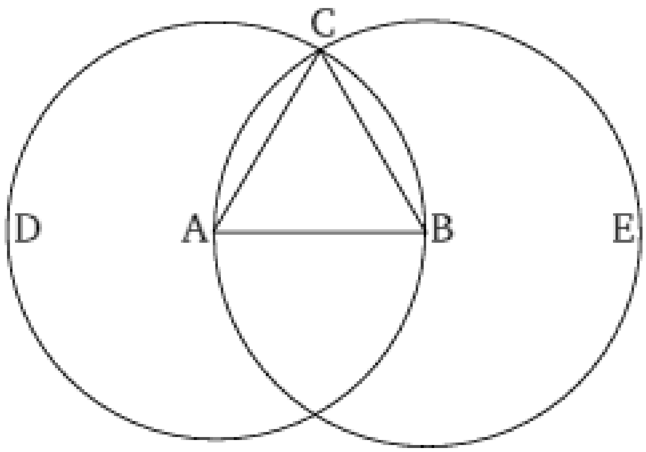
2. And if equal things are added to equal things then the wholes are equal.

3. And if equal things are subtracted from equal things then the remainders are equal.

4. And things coinciding with one another are equal to one another.

5. And the whole [is] greater than the part.

Proposition 1



To construct an equilateral triangle on a given finite straight-line.

Let AB be the given finite straight-line.

So it is required to construct an equilateral triangle on the straight-line AB.

Let the circle BCD with center A and radius AB have been drawn [Post. 3], and again let the circle ACE with center B and radius BA have been drawn [Post. 3]. And let the straight-lines CA and CB have been joined from the point C, where the circles cut one another, to the points A and B (respectively) [Post. 1].

And since the point A is the center of the circle CDB, AC is equal to AB [Def. 1.15]. Again, since the point B is the center of the circle CAE, BC is equal to BA [Def. 1.15]. But CA was also shown to be equal to AB. Thus, CA and CB are each equal to AB. But things equal to the same thing are also equal to one another [C.N.1]. Thus, CA is also equal to CB. Thus, the three (straight-lines) CA, AB, and BC are equal to one another.

Thus, the triangle ABC is equilateral, and has been constructed on the given finite straight-line AB. (Which is) the very thing it was required to do.

Media Text
Translator Robert Fitzpatrick's complete version of Euclid's Elements of Geometry, in bookmarked PDF form, with side-by-side Greek and English text:
http://farside.ph.utexas.edu/euclid/Elements.pdf

Cannon, Annie J. "Classifying the Stars." ***The Universe of Stars*****. Edited by Harlow Shapeley and Cecilia H. Payne. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Observatory, 1926. (1926)**

Sunlight and starlight are composed of waves of various lengths, which the eye, even aided by a telescope, is unable to separate. We must use more than a telescope. In order to sort out the component colors, the light must be dispersed by a prism, or split up by some other means. For instance, sunbeams passing through rain drops, are transformed into the myriad-tinted rainbow. The familiar rainbow spanning the sky is Nature's most glorious demonstration that light is composed of many colors.

The very beginning of our knowledge of the nature of a star dates back to 1672, when Isaac Newton gave to the world the results of his experiments on passing sunlight through a prism. To describe the beautiful band of rainbow tints, produced when sunlight was dispersed by his three-cornered piece of glass, he took from the Latin the word spectrum, meaning an appearance. The rainbow is the spectrum of the Sun.

[...]

In 1814, more than a century after Newton, the spectrum of the Sun was obtained in such purity that an amazing detail was seen and studied by the German optician, Fraunhofer. He saw that the multiple spectral tings, ranging from delicate violet to deep red, were crossed by hundreds of fine dark lines. In other words, there were narrow gaps in the spectrum where certain shades were wholly blotted out.

We must remember that the word spectrum is applied not only to sunlight, but also to the light of any glowing substance when its rays are sorted out by a prism or a grating.

Bronowski, Jacob, and Millicent Selsam*. Biography of an Atom.* New York: Harper, 1965. (1965)

The birth began in a young star. A young star is a mass of hydrogen nuclei. Because the star is hot (about thirteen million degrees at the center), the nuclei cannot hold on to their electrons. The electrons wander around. The nuclei of hydrogen—that is, the protons—are moving about very fast too. From time to time one proton runs headlong into another. When this happens, one of the protons loses its electric charge and changes into a neutron. The pair then cling together as a single nucleus of heavy hydrogen. This nucleus will in time capture another proton. Now there is a nucleus with two protons and one neutron, called light helium. When two of these nuclei smash into each other, two protons are expelled in the process. This creates a nucleus of helium with two protons and two neutrons.

This is the fundamental process of fusion by which the primitive hydrogen of the universe is built up into a new basic material, helium. In this process, energy is given off in the form of heat and light that make the stars shine. It is the first stage in the birth of the heavier atoms.

Walker, Jearl. "Amusement Park Physics." *Roundabout: Readings from the Amateur Scientist in Scientific American*. New York: Scientific American, 1985. (1985)
From "Amusement Park Physics: Thinking About Physics While Scared to Death (on a Falling Roller Coaster)"

The rides in an amusement park not only are fun but also demonstrate principles of physics. Among them are rotational dynamics and energy conversion. I have been exploring the rides at Geauga Lake Amusement Park near Cleveland and have found that nearly every ride offers a memorable lesson.

To me the scariest rides at the park are the roller coasters. The Big Dipper is similar to many of the roller coasters that have thrilled passengers for most of this century. The cars are pulled by chain t the top of the highest hill along the track, Released from the chain as the front of the car begins its descent, the unpowered cars have almost no speed and only a small acceleration. As more cars get onto the downward slope the acceleration increases. It peaks when all the cars are headed downward. The peak value is the product of the acceleration generated by gravity and the sine of the slope of the track. A steeper descent generates a greater acceleration, but packing the coaster with heavier passengers does not.

When the coaster reaches the bottom of the valley and starts up the next hill, there is an instant when the cars are symmetrically distributed in the valley. The acceleration is zero. As more cars ascend the coaster begins to slow, reaching its lowest speed just as it is symmetrically positioned at the top of the hill.

A roller coaster functions by means of transfers of energy. When the chain hauls the cars to the top of the first hill, it does work on the cars, endowing them with gravitational potential energy, the energy of a body in a gravitational field with respect to the distance of the body from some reference level such as the ground. As the cars descend into the first valley, much of the stored energy is transferred into kinetic energy, the energy of motion.

Preston, Richard. *The Hot Zone: A Terrifying True Story*. New York: Anchor, 1995. (1995)
From "Something in the Forest"

1980 New Year's Day

Charles Monet was a loner. He was a Frenchman who live by himself in a little wooden bungalow on the private lands of the Nzoia Sugar Factory, a plantation in western Kenya that spread along the Nzoiz Rover within sight of Mount Elgon, a huge, solitary, extinct volcano that rises to a height of fourteen thousand feet near the edge of the Rift Valley. Monet's history is a little obscure. As with so many expatriates who end up in Africa, it is not clear what brought him there. Perhaps he had been in some kind of trouble in France. Or perhaps he had been drawn to Kenya by the beauty of the country. He was an amateur naturalist, fond of birds and animals but not of humanity in general. He was fifty-six years old, of medium height and medium build with smooth, straight brown hair; a good-looking man. It seems that his only close friends were women who lived in towns around the mountain, yet even they could not recall much about him for the doctors who investigated his death. His job was to take care of the sugar factory's water-pumping machinery, which drew water from the Nzoia River and delivered it to many miles of sugar-cane fields. They say that he spent most of his day inside the pump house by the river as if it pleased him to watch and listen to the machines doing their work.

Devlin, Keith. *Life by the Numbers.* New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1999. (1999)
From Chapter 3: "Patterns of Nature"

Though animals come in many shapes and sizes, there are definite limits on the possible size of an animal of a particular shape. King Kong simply could not exist, for instance. As Labarbara has calculated, if you were to take a gorilla and blow it up to the size of King Kong, its weight would increase by more than 14,000 times but the size of its bones would increase by only a few hundred times. Kong's bones would simply not be able to support his body. He would collapse under his own weight!

And the same is true for all those giant locusts, giant ants, and the like. Imagining giants—giant people, giant animals, or giant insects—might prove the basis for an entertaining story, but the rules of science say that giants could not happen. You can't have a giant anything. If you want to change size, you have to change to overall design.

The reason is quite simple. Suppose you double the height (or length) of any creature, say, a gorilla. The weight will increase 8 times (i.e., 2 cubed), but the cross section of the bones will increase only fourfold (2 squared). Or, if you increase the height of the gorilla 10 times, the weight will increase, 1,000 times (10 cubed), but the cross-sectional area of the bones will increase only 100 times (10 squared). In general, when you increase the height by a certain factor, the weight will increase by the cube of that factor but the cross section of the bone will increase only by the square of that factor.

Hoose, Phillip. *The Race to Save Lord God Bird*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004. (2004)

Hakim, Joy. *The Story of Science: Newton at the Center.* Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2005. (2005)

Probability, a branch of mathematics, began with gambling. Pierre de Fermat (of the famous Last Theorem), Blaise Pascal, and the Bernoullis wanted to know the mathematical odds of winning at the card table. Probability didn't tell them for certain that they would or wouldn't draw an ace; it just told them how likely it was. A deck of 52 cards has 4 aces, so the odds of the first drawn card being an ace are 4 in 52 (or 1in 13).

If 20 cards have been played and not an ace among them, those odds improve to 4 in 32 (1in 8). Always keep in mind that probability is about the likelihood of outcomes, not the certainty. If there are only 4 cards left in the deck, and no aces have been played, you can predict with certainty that the next card will be an ace—but you're not using probability; you're using fact. Probability is central to the physics that deals with the complex world inside atoms. We can't determine the action of an individual particle, but with a large number of atoms, predictions based on probability become very accurate.

Nicastro, Nicholas. *Circumference: Eratosthenes and the Ancient Quest to Measure the Globe*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2008. (2008)
From "The Astrolabe"

The astrolabe (in Greek, "star reckoner") is a manual computing and observation device with myriad uses in astronomy, time keeping, surveying, navigation, and astrology. The principles behind the most common variety, the planispheric astrolabe, were first laid down in antiquity by the Greeks, who pioneered the notion of projecting three-dimensional images on flat surfaces. The device reached a high degree of refinement in the medieval Islamic world, where it was invaluable for determining prayer times and the direction of Mecca from anywhere in the Muslim world. The astrolabe was introduced to Europe by the eleventh century, where is saw wide use until the Renaissance.

The fundamental innovation underlying the astrolabe was the projection of an image of the sky (usually the northern hemisphere, centered on Polaris) on a plane corresponding to the earth's equator. This image, which was typically etched on a brass plate, was inserted into a round frame (the mater) whose circumference was marked in degrees or hours. Over the plate was fitted a lattice-work disk, the rete, with pointers to indicate the positions of major stars. A metal hand, similar to those on a clock, was hinged with the rete at the center of the instrument, as was a sighting vane (the alidade) for determining the angular height of the stars or other features, such as mountaintops. The entire device was usually not more than six to eight inches in diameter and half an inch thick.

One common use of the astrolabe was to determine the time of day, even after dark.

Other uses included determination of sunrise, and sunset times for any date past or future, predicting eclipses, finding important stars or constellations, and measuring the height of earthbound objects and the circumference of the earth. For this and other reasons, the astrolabe has been called "the world's first personal computer."

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency/U.S. Department of Energy. Recommended Levels of Insulation. **http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=home_sealing.hm_improvement_insulation_table 2010. (2010)**

Recommended Levels of Insulation

Insulation level are specified by R-Value. R-Value is a measure of insulation's ability to resist heat traveling through it. The higher the R-Value the better the thermal per

Zone	Add Insulation to Attic		Floor
	Uninsulated Attic	Existing 3–4 Inches of Insulation	
1	R30 to R49	R25 to R30	R13
2	R30 to R60	R25 to R38	R13 to R19
3	R30 to R60	R25 to R38	R19 to R25
4	R38 to R60	R38	R25 to R30
5 to 8	R49 to R60	R38 to R49	R25 to R30

Wall Insulation: Whenever exterior siding is removed on an

Uninsulated wood-frame wall:

- **Drill holes in the sheathing and blow insulation into the empty wall cavity before installing the new siding, and**
- **Zones 3–4: Add R5 insulative wall sheathing beneath the new siding**
- **Zones 5–8: Add R5 to R6 insulative wall sheathing beneath the new siding.**

Insulated wood-frame wall:

- **For Zones 4 to 8: Add R5 insulative sheathing before installing the new siding.**

Sample Performance Tasks for Informational Texts: History/Social Studies & Science, Mathematics, and Technical Subjects

- Students *compare the* similarities and differences in *point of view* in works by Dee Brown and Evan Connell regarding the Battle of Little Bighorn, analyzing *how* the authors *treat the same* event and *which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts*. [RH.9–10.6]

- Students analyze the role of African American soldiers in the Civil War by *comparing and contrasting primary source* materials against *secondary* syntheses such as Jim Haskins's *Black, Blue and Gray: African Americans in the Civil War*. [RH.9–10.9]

- Students *determine the meaning of words* such as *quadrant, astrolabe, equator*, and *horizon line* in Joan Dash's *The Longitude Prize* as well as *phrases* such as *dead reckoning* and *sailing the parallel* that reflect *social aspects of history*. [RH.9–10.4]

- Students *cite specific textual evidence* from Annie J. Cannon's "Classifying the Stars" *to support* their *analysis of* the scientific importance of the discovery that light is composed of many colors. Students *include* in their *analysis precise details* from the text (such as Cannon's repeated use of the image of the rainbow) to buttress their explanation. [RST.9–10.1].

- Students *determine how* Jearl Walker clarifies the *phenomenon* of acceleration in his essay "Amusement Park Physics," *accurately summarizing* his *conclusions* regarding the physics of roller coasters *and tracing* how *sup-*